

## **RED HEAD**

By AE Reiff

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#### **Acknowledgments**

I was walking the shores of Snowdonia. Lines of old battle poems were whispering in the resignation of the fallen, a divine agriculture of the praises of Iesus. Red Head continues the embassy of balladlike forms of *The True Light That Lights* (2020) to welcome the Lord of stars and plants and hearts. The first lines of the lyric of this Unknown Soldier begin for *Red Head* as a villanelle, "Only three have returned from the battle's rage," begun late at night while driving. The impressions of dozens of sites in Caernaryonshire and Anglesey, in the English Lake Country, Stonehenge, Glastonbury, the Tor, Bath and Old Sarum held this image in my mind of red on gold. Some of these poems of agony of war, love of woman, worship of God, the true subject of every country and person, presume Aneirin and Taliesin at the battle of Gododdin at Catraeth. Many poems appeared in *The Texas Quarterly, Lucille 3, Latitude* 30 18', Awhile, Ygdrasil: A Journal of the Poetic Arts, G. Dance's Penny's Poetry Blog, Ink Pantry, Emanations 9, The True Light That Lights, Recon and The Sparrow's Trombone to whose editors grateful acknowledgment is made.

For Eden Magister in Artibus (Prifysgol Cymru Bangor)

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THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

#### **BARLEY FEED**

There is a harvest in a cutting down, In the shed blood of the speared hero, There is a redding of the land Before green graves under sod.

Gold the heroes of valor, gold, Directed to heaven, not strangers, Wise men, they leave a country, Dropping like fruit from a tree.

I am rich in cultivation, A soft plough, I rend the ground, The grasses, the aired bodies, Stir about the break of day.

No sparing of the vine nor branches, So outstretched the whitened lances. An ardent star across the lightening field No trembling saw that lofty hill concealed.

First flowers on these mountains My wealth, the treasured sun, The purpled blades shed blood. No piercéd then would not be pierced again.

Now earth, be made sweet by this barley feed.

#### **RED HEAD**

Alone by bloom from the root Or in beds from seed begun, There is a crimson head In the spring-brightened loam.

Here's a bloom that died Alone in the sunlit plain, But it will not return alone When sun warms earth again.

They feel the fallen spring rain Who the ground concealed, Twice-new, the air they regain, Death only increases their yield. The blood of the wounds of the world Thus the red flower shed, "I lay on the bloody field, I it was who bled."

#### **FIELD**

Long the days and long the nights
I held this image in my mind of red on gold,
Blood on flowers, bold furrows
sweep the valley to a glade.

It is a glade I know, but thunders one hill That rests a back into ground so still. Three hundred had fallen of bright Gwynedd's horde, Bright battalions with their blue bright swords. Bright battalions with their blue bright swords!

On the strand white lances, clear mead was the sea!

Flames of shedding blood, steel blades by heaps of dead,

Already ravens were croaking above blood.

## **SONG**

Only three have returned from the battle's rage

(Ab Edmund, Siôn Eos are gone) And I who was bleeding to sing this song.

Now these had been given a second day To die, for the battle was long. Only three have remained from the battle's rage

Where they lingered until the bright dawn. There I strolled arm and arms in the glade, And I, who was bleeding, to sing this song

even more for the battle my pay, as I bend and shake like the corn. Only three have returned from the battle's rage

I saw Edmund and Siôn in the sun, Our heroes were gone about break of day, And I, who was bleeding, to sing this song

Come at last no more from my grave, I, Edmund, Siôn Eos are one. Only three had returned from the battle's rage And I, who was bleeding, to sing this song.

#### **GREEN HILLS**

September is the cruelest month, It brings new worlds of war, At noon its surface bore our boats where the green hills come to shore From the everlasting ways of peace and war.

The hills reflect our feet, the evening hills of sunlit face reflect what the winds repeat of the everlasting ways.

#### THE PLANT

I live among you though you know me not, But knowledge came to me found out of doubt,

Hear, see me on my stem, I have come out, For now I rise and bloom while you're

about.

I could but now receive you for I grow Nearer to where my Lord his veins let flow, He has me and he will not let me go.

I am undone yet he shall be my Lord, He has into my life his water poured That I bleed with him for he loves the world.

He loves the world with his own shed blood, He has given me the way that I should go, He has taken away all of my will and He would

That I scatter these seeds he would sow.

#### **LOVE-LIES-BLEEDING**

Immortal Amarant, a Flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life
Began to bloom, but soon for man's offence
To Heav'n removed where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft shading the Fount of Life.
And where the river of Bliss through midst of Heaven
Rolls o're Elysian Flowers her Amber stream;
With these that never fade the Spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks enwreathed with beams.

Paradise Lost, III: 353361.

Where Love-Lies-Bleeding stretches all bejeweled,

I watch the fields that purple with their blood,

Incarnate flowers quicker turn to red, A spark, a torch, forgotten in a flood. Was this their care and that a sign, to light The mine of spice that fills the heart? Or must

The crimson drape of time obscure the flight

Of sunlight fleeing from the mind of dust? There flowers bloom a vein of Love and Life To wind about a disembodied cross, But lose into the earthly air their life, As night, dark sun, burns darkly on their loss.

And now my heart is but an aging sack, For Love's gone to the world and won't come back.

From their blissful Bowers
Of Amarantin Shade, Fountain or Spring,
By the waters of Life, where ere they sat
In fellowships of joy: the Sons of Light
Hasted.

#### REPARATION

O never could be found Garments too good For Thee to wear, but these, of thine own blood. Richard Crashaw

We take the blessing that our Lord has given,

The life that fills our hearts here under heaven,

Releasing all our care into that sea Where by reflection we resemble Thee, Our Lord-Who-Marked-The-Heaven, so we trust, whatever marred him, it was God bruised him, no other beauty we desire thus

Who join with him, no form nor comeliness.

Carry your sorrow, bear your grief to one pierced breast of love, the Lord's, and there we lie, but for his pain and our iniquity,

Save for another One would dare to die. He died with us while we were yet in sin And here our peace and victory begin.

#### **SACRED HEART**

Oh Lord before, I knew thee for my food, The only nourishment on which to dine, My promised former love I now renew, For worldly fortune I have all resigned The flesh I seek to give already thine. A feeding rose has given me this sign Of nourishment, its root within the ground, There flows the spring of springs and my buds swell,

His image I embody where I dwell When I abide within the Lord I've found. He at the wedding feast who would elect, Who says to me my friend accept my peace And purity to heal and come accept My heart and living on my love so feed.

#### **ELEGY**

## For Henry

You came like love, a day, you leave the same,

The sad week, now the month, the year will bring,

You rose before the dawn, though might have stayed,

When you, who past resolved your life, took wing.

In a man's last days a stillness comes, And though he speak of other times and more,

He'll "live to ninety," as his race is run, The periods of stillness then grow more and more.

Out before dawn, all day among the doves, You sing barefoot and lazed with earth again, As all men live they end their days on love, And suddenly last promises from you they win.

#### THE BODY

The spiritual did not come first but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

I lay in bed trying to get my breath, slept a long hour or two before dawn, gradually I became aware my body had risen slightly from its sleeping form. This felt good so I didn't move, went in and out of sleep several times. I could hear differently then, wheezing groans, coughs and forced breaths

and sounds like long sonorous moans. I was either asleep in this raised state hearing my own flesh cry out in pain, or awake hearing the world's sound, loud early in night which had since calmed down.

It was like a train or a moan the world cried out,

a patient deep in pain this resonant thing with a mellow groan and travail.

I heard it snoring in some detail.

I conclude from this a spiritual world exists, that its spiritual body lacks sense and that something is terribly wrong if it makes these sounds like an old folks home.

Back in flesh I didn't hear it again.

#### **BROTHER'S SONG**

"Come about in time again," Egypt enchoired, Echoing like an inner triangle, "Come down the Nile again, be desired, O come down again!"

Space ahead and away, Israel shone In the Light of Lights, "Come round to Jerusalem,

He has desired to come again."

Round again. Christ expired between Like a spray of rose enfolding the sun, "Come into your heart and be mine As love come round again."

#### THE WAY INTO THE FLOWERING HEART

The way into the flowering heart Inside the flowering man Is over the inside itself Inside the newfoundland. The head is hot, the hands Are colder than the air

The arctic-heat will kill away
The spring the petals bear.
The bursting stalk above the eyes
Takes root into the brain
And waves the life of the waving world
Into the heart again.

#### **DITHYRAMBS**

When your father grows up and your mother grows up and the world grows up and you grow up,

when you help your neighbor grow up, and when you love the world,

when you love the life of the world of blossoms and waves and the nectar waves grow way up high and we see you fly,

do be kind to yourself and neighbor, do be kind to myself and me, do be kind to the blooms in blooming so everybody sees

that when you love the world you're loving the life of the world and then you love the world.

## **PLEASANT THINGS**

For Eden

There is an apple tree with gentle flowers That grows beside a meadow on a stream, Its fragrance captivates the wondrous hours to this one dream, that wandering Each night I gathered in the heavens, Violets and the Rose of Sharon and lay Them beneath the shining blossoms that fall

And thus I labored late into the day.
I came to the orchards by night
And stood in the appled light, the white
Blooms falling to the earth. There gathered
I the meadow sweet I have obtained.

#### **MAY POEM**

Will we grow old my dear, our petals wear Like thin and timeless time-worn lips, Will this flesh fade even like the rose, Gone back to its wrinkled root?

All at its full thy flesh I took, And knew you in wondrous ways now forgot,

The bloom of the breasts, the dew on the skin,

Will these pass like the rest?

Once did we run in fields, raise quick knees,

Embraced in a wood, made elegant a glade, Even now we embrace and your breath grows hot,

But spring passes and summer will fade.

Time bent with age the gnarled tree, Increased the girth, made rough the skin, Think you that this shall fall to you and me When we're to our bodies again?

Taliesin came to storm tossed earth There in the world between death and birth It was his to learn that he could not save God it was in the salt sand wave If you visit with him in that good night will be filled with You know the earth light I will be satisfied when I awake My deadly wounds they are not so great In the lingering goodness of God's heart He breathes bends bleeds till the heaven parts The words of God pure silver words of the Lord In them he saw the beauty that the saint With angel of the Lord surrounds We exalt his name with the heavenly sound He delivers the poor both man and beast We cease from anger delight in peace Living and in death it is his mirth and inherit To save by sacrifice

earth

**But Taliesin** was not told all I met him in the worlds where no night falls We shared meat and bread sat on a stone It was that time that I learned this song Learned to distinguish the great and least And that the Lord loves both man

and beast

but now I'm old Once I was young Still I wait in the corner of this old sheepfold I'm a sort of a shepherd catch sheep for the sun till the Lord And I wait in the earth should come. Once I thought the universe fulfilled, that he But it was only my heart tilled.

## **NUT**

Behold a thing the Lord has done Bordered in a shell of walnuts Hemmed in a dark kernel Barked it all. Crack me, The fruit I bare is thine.

## **PRAISE POEMS**

## The Bright Extensive Will

For Beatrice

As starry seas are caught up into clouds To whirl Earth's sphere throughout all time, Through space and out, where rising in a shroud

They roll the bright extensive will to find Their will to fall again in showers, so crowds

Descending off the wheel give misty signs Of life, and sons of Elohim who bow From out the sky, concentrated and blind In all their beams, then enter creation. As though one could with the word written In earth's center in the matter of its making,

As earth's heart was into pieces breaking, Come into the body. Then wars should cease,

And earth, all surface, sky and core, find peace.

#### ANGEL STANDING IN THE SUN

It came about a sun all blazing bright had showered gold into the heart of man, as clouds transparent sprung with golden light

like wings of angel's gold through blood then ran.

And shining out in glory still like light a being light-radiant of golden man, whose living passion like a redding sun, with bright and fragrant flames of gold had run.

To you in whom all gold has been perfected, First Begotten of the fire and flood, My heart is raised to your sole light protected,

Blaze there thou Daysman in the fiery blood.

My thought is ever sprung from one desire, That please you to burn sole within this fire.

# TO TAME THE KINGDOMS LET HIS ANGELS RUN

Lift up your eyes and look unto the hills, God's glory is declared from the heaven, He warms the earth as though the living sun

That causes plants to grow and rivers run From Him had sprung the meadow and green tree

Lift up a branch and all in praise of Thee.

Man he created sovereign under heaven To joy him in the light-renewing sun, There in his veins the dancing rivers run, But he's as much a mine as he's a tree That lifts a branch and sings his praise of Thee

Who lit the dawn and raised the blooming hills.

There was an angel standing in the sun Amid the solar flare where rivers run Who sang, the heaven's a plant, celestial tree

With garnished fruit that stems its praise of Thee.

When stars are trees, then galaxies are hills,

Where poets dream embodied still of heaven.

All through the night earth's springs and rivers run While orchards rest in fields, the apple tree Outgrows from earth between us, me and thee,

And if clouds sink upon the summer hills, Surround our infancy under the heaven, Then as we grow clouds part, outshines the sun.

Is it man or heaven, the springing tree Whose green boughs so transpire their love of thee?

All praise the growth that lies upon the hills.

Stand on your feet you men, look at the heaven,

Redemption near, he comes with light, the son

To tame the kingdoms lets his angels run.

Heaven, earth, man, tree, praise the living God, thee

Who wrought salvation, light and life upon the hills.

Rejoice you lands, he comes, the king of heaven

Whose glory so outshines the lowering sun That spinning globe that round him ever runs

Will cease and root in his eternal tree.

**SON RISING** 

For Marie

Jesus is in the earth, now springs alive, He leads the faithful saints into the heaven, No more shall we within the body strive, But free of dust and earth shall follow him. His light shines brighter than the nearest sun,

His light whose volume fills the planes of space,

The whirling stars will slow their rotation, And galaxies, grown flowers of his grace Stretch on their stems and open wide their hearts.

There is no more expanse than in his love. He frees the mighty, lightens darkened hearts

And his own Excellence his glory proves This is the Lord that I have loved from birth.

He comes to rule and thus to save the earth.

#### THE BRANCH

When

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the Lord of All
              descended into flesh,
                came through the
                  million worlds
                  into the one
                    of mercy,
                    wisdom,
                     beauty,
                      love,
      unlike the prism that divides the ray,
    undiffused, he came into the body's clay,
                     the Son
                      of the
                     Divine
                    Wisdom,
                  the Son, the
                    Incarnate
                   Redeemer.
                   Our world
                    has been
                    recovered
                  by his being
                    no extra-
                    terrestrial
                   intelligence;
                 his human body
               shaped it to a tree
              that roots in wisdom
            but whose beauty's trunk
     to the earth sphere a branch extended,
on that tree the Lord Beauteous hung suspended,
    and then we were enabled to receive him.
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#### **CHRISTMAS TREE**

Now is Christ my Christmas tree, evergreen not dry, his roots grow into his own stream and into him flow I.

Blessed are the waters that freshly flow From his incarnate stream, Transpire in the living bough, Fall in the rain.

I came to the water and thirsted, sought for his Lamb light, that God given Tree of Life, I bought his water right.

Who has not seen his limbs outstretched, boughs with his blessing, beauty and grace bowed down to us, fragrant pressing.

Now is he my Christmas tree, my ornament of life, his roots grow into his own stream and into him flow I.

#### A GREEN TREE

There is no cold in Christ nor winter storm To chill the bone, there is no frost in him, No freeze there kills the stem, no ice brings harm.

He lives in us to keep his branches warm, A green tree ever rooted deep within, There is no cold in Christ nor winter storm.

There where the harvest hills through summer run

To fall, he keeps a barn, a winter bin, No freeze there kills the stem, no ice brings harm.

He has into us all his flowers sown A seeding of himself, garden within, There is no cold in Christ nor winter storm.

He there a gardener of his lovely plants, forms

Protoplasm and a living mind, No freeze then kills the stem, no ice brings harm.

The Rose of Nazareth, Lord to flesh was born,

Accept his seed sons, daughters, women, men,

There is no cold in Christ nor winter storm,

No freeze there kills the stem, no ice brings harm.

#### RIVER ROCK

For Darryl King

The water of this river fed by springs has overrun the stones hid in the clay. The flood erodes the lively stones, reveals surface, depth, in large and small, This took ten thousand seasons of the leaf in all.

Whatever was the reason, kindred souls who lived and died took earth.
They lived for the purpose of its restoration.
Just as the flood revealed the stones in clay,
These assembled at the latter day.

There where the river ran over us we lived and learned to build the one, the spiritual friend.

Christ ran over us, some to lift and blend, Some peacefully rested he in banks here under sand. But now the flood bares open the whole bed of the stream And the righteous are revealed, or so we learn.

#### **SUMMER STARS**

What is it they pursue in darkest thought, That whiteness in the furnace of the mind Rayed out into the million paths they sought

Within the day's profoundest blue? Stars blind as gold remelt the core of you Who candles rising in a colored glass Will with the seething yellow sun view Ripeness in the south when summer's past.

But there shall come an orb to light the sky The blazing sun, Daystar returned alive, And ancient night will taper from our sight, Descend into itself, as night will die. Look you the wide world all completely through And see the wave of stars that follow you.

# ON A CONJUNCTION OF PLANETS

for Robert and Cynthia

What lover's open lips we are tonight In time the endless world, our minds unfurled

Into and out of each other, the light-Cast summer sky, the light-borne orient world

With planets never seen appears to be, The lady Venus, she Hesperide, Is open in the moon's new horn who now Is casting all her smile by the sun And as red Mars rings to a russet core There too is Saturn hid within a mist Of rings eternal, smiling all the more As if the four that rolled together kissed. And while this change is happening in the sky

We marry all our loves in Gemini.

#### LOVE'S ILLUMINATION

Love is a mirror of the mind I see, A mist that winds opaque about a face, The moon, a soul of air waves in the sea, An open flower blooming from that place Where shining forth like planets out in space,

Or now a fiery angel of the sun, Or now like beams ore' lit with moonlight grace

That shine and glimmer forth the starry run,

Oh how with your wide eyes shines out the sun,

A soul from out its body, like the moon Alone at night when she her circuit's run And dawns to marry with the sun. Then soon this earth is black as far from me She shines, I love's illumination see.

## **PATTERN**

If I a pattern of the universe divine,

Stars and plants see joined in luminous light,

Hear the wind's song, thunder in heart and mind,

That these portend symbols of universal might,

Then I consider first their means of union, The balance of beauty with power and force,

What adherence! God seems like a woman, Holds together his family of atoms from wars.

Out far within deep the reach of dark space,

He acts on this pattern of union for earth, When he marries, he is husband and spouse,

Birth his great mystery, creation of life, So while he acts as our father and mother, all along we knew him as our lover.

#### **HEAVEN'S MAN**

Who then first found the cosmos in a man, Divided minutes of his arc, set axis? If man be heavens, then heaven is for man, And this his truth, how big the universe. He is no sun that planets orb and orb, Or like the moon, his body old and dead, Nor is he earth, that planet swirling through

His sphere, or other, Mars or Jupiter.
What is man that heaven admired him,
Or sons of men to be so greeting them?
Creating heaven with a touch, his fingers,
God gave to man dominion of his hands.
In all the world and worlds beyond oh Lord,
I seek to serve you and to know your word.

#### **MOTHER'S SONG**

For Anne

Will the earth resolve this question Her heart can be touched, Like a woman she gives life Child bearer loves much.

Did the sun think earth was a woman When she bore our kind, organic life And knew not herself nor God her husband Sky-father, till she was his wife?

Earth herself knows her creatures, Mother of life holds a yet fertile womb, Is it earth the sun sees with her babies Round continents of families of seas?

She raises civilizations in her home. Her siblings adolescent Like nations independent She dandles upon her knees.

A mother must know both love and sorrow, Today she wears a fine blue robe, For she has suffered me and her children Who forge their hearts' song anew.

#### **Dawn**

#### For Both of You

Yes she is fair, the one who came from robes

She folded of progressive light.

When first I saw the head, sought God's blessing on it,

Then the body came full into the flesh, emerged

Legs, feet, mounted the terrestrial sphere Her bodies' light was an astonished tear, Opalescent radiant, red, gold and blue, A cloud's edge pregnant with the dawning light.

Then I beheld her intelligent eye so bright Oh give me that look again bright Elizabeth.

#### **SPOUSE**

I hold you now when once I did but seek to know unrisen, the one Daystar, I sensed your coming then but I was weak, and also at that time I was at war. It was not simply felt this destiny, A door where inward certitude of sense like dawning light from dark I felt give way. I could but ask the sun to run its course, but now the way's so clear that can distract my seeing mind from its first choice and heart.

In all these acts the outer mode is less clear now we're joined than when apart. What of it though, now that I hold you close?

It's only my confusion I have lost.

#### **I WISDOM**

"The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old...before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth...I was there when he set the heavens in place," (*Proverbs* 8, 22-31)

There was an angel in the height
Who took a long roll, then clouds
Were lifted. Under my wing was the light
Of the presence within
Eternal life.

I floated to the third dimension
In a cube of yellow hair.
With the eternal somersaults of light
I caught apple blossoms as they fell to earth,
They were so fair.

A point in the line of stellar trajectories, I was Mars when you landed me, Solar fire when you felt me, I was on the outermost planet Astride the gloom.

I was historical persons,
Signed the Declaration.
I was the centurion who loved his servant.
I fought underground
Where I died.

I rose in mist from a stream in the morning, I surrounded the fragrance of new mown hay, I was shaping clouds for evening, Choosing colors, the first rose, the purple End of the day.

I was a last leaf in fall
Until I was alive in the redbud tree.
I nested all winter with waxwings.
Joined early robins in wet hills
Under cedar.

Who do you think I am while you are reading?
When the word takes inspired flame I ignite.
I am the word in all of its meanings,
Put into sentences I leap up, oh wisdom,
I incarnate.

Where will I be when you are seeking me?
Shall I stand upon the ground and smile invisibly?
Will you think to look for me in a bad man?
Will you think I am in your heart,
Inconsolable?

I was the question of a trusting child,
I fought back an answering reply,
I was the disillusioned, the rejected heart,
Though I yearned, this also I did not embrace.
I wept.

I ripened the fig on its branch, turned a pear Green to gold. I was polishing apples With my long reach. Filling the fertile seed With two weeks' growth, I prepared the ground For my harvest.

Am I so selfish in my care for the living?
I rode the seed in the belly of a bird,
Was cast out, this lime made me fertile,
I spread in groves, a dozen at once, solitary
In vacant fields.

I cared for the man whose ashes were scattered, Could reproduce him at once from a speck. I will reassemble the billions, bring them all with me,

I have not forgotten, but my hand is stretched out To the living.

I wait for the moment when you are alone,
When all the seeds of my experience have grown.
I am around you, under you and above you,
Now is the moment to take me at last
To your heart's home.

I crept with luminous fire up trunks and branches,
As the moon rose I set forth with the owl,
Crested tall grasses, hunted
Till the mouse froze, dove with talons,
But not for food.

I was the living stone, from my pores water came.

My body rested back in the hill,

I set the flowing cup upon my table.

I am also a quarry, men come to set me

In their foundations.

I am water, the Wood, the tree, The rock, the mortar and the building stone, I make myself of myself myself, I am in hands, brains, plans, trades, Who is like me?

I rise in realization of my own being,
Take root in the spreading ground that I filled,
I am awake, synapse of one idea,
Palpable, real, breathe awhile in joy,
My discovery.

While they search for me they know me not, I come to my own if they will have me, It is a little thing, I make a man hungry And I am his bread, thirst and he drinks me, Filled to the brim.

I tire not easily when I shake the mountains,
I appeared at noon time myself transparent,
I cast no shadow when I took on flesh.
What are these wounds in my hands? If they ask me
I tell them.

I was inspiration for a thousand works,
I held the chisel, I taught the eye,
I was discovery in night, in the day
I remembered myself, let the notes play
From an ink pen.

I am the blind poet, sent to justify The ways of God to men. I was in the garden, Before the flood, I was alive And I live forevermore and I come quickly.

I was reading a poem, I was the sound And the voice of the speaker, I sent For ears, for hearts to fill, I took The ringing of bells, set verse, Then I was glad.

I was glad when the core of light opened
And I saw myself coming for my own,
I wore the white robe of day in its dawning,
The sun was an ethereal circle when I stopped
The earth's turning.

Do you know me as apocalypse,
Here where I once turned worlds to improve them?
So you have me alpha and omega, so extreme
For one who turns a plane, applies some polish,
Adjusts a spin.

I was an inherited son, traveled the fir country, Whence I came when my time was fulfilled. No different from the foal to its mother, I came For milk and was feasted, I was loved thus By my own.

I was still in the vineyard, grown with the grape

In the foot of the vintage, pruned with the vine, I was harvested in wheat heads, sown in the field, But even as the feasting began I was Time's fruition.

I was ages growing, root grew, bud opened, Have flowered in the century of history, The stone, wood, spring, well, Vine and stalk of my being Just incomplete.

I need a loan from the hearer, must hear the sound Of hands clapping, this bright adoration, Hold first blessing over heads made abundant, Harvest bins fill bursting, thus consumed, And this by singing.

#### **SOLITUDE SURROUNDED**

Speaking
Of the white ace
Of spades in the universe surrounded,
using words like mystic and visionary
to confound each other,
we go our way de-verbalizing verse.
But there is a human need of singing,
of praise to prove us grateful for our being
beyond what the cathode and the radio say,

everyone tells us we're not meant for that.

Different temperaments for all, humanly speaking, till no one is left in the world but ourselves singing the Great Solitude, surrounded by the air our gravities attract,

not thoughts like our own but their opposites, solitude surrounded, compassed by pets, homes, wives, children, oceans, walls, When a monastery would have suited best

And

We

Live

Long

Lives.

#### THE PLANETARY BULLDOZERS ARE COMING

The planetary bulldozers are coming. Earth mover's novae sound the air, and soot like the ashes of rain, ceaseless, untiring.

The planetary bulldozers are driving witless machines

into unconscious beds of streams,
where antediluvian soils
will be overturned.
They are coming.
Jet engines replace the ocean roar.

Oh what a fruit is the earth to be peeled and spat, each element divided with a mad cat on its trail.

These are no nightmares.
These no visions.
The moon will beat down
without an eclipse.
The sun will roll its tongue for water.
Adam sees in the mirror nothing at all.
The time is 2000 and more,
Hear the machines roar.

The planetary bulldozers have come to poor earth.

What will you do when the tow truck stops at your door?

## THE BANQUET OF GOD

A man is only a man in conflict with evil and devoted in humility with faith. The hazards of anachronism of pyruvate phosphatase, a key in the metabolic cycle fueling life, connecting anaerobic and aerobic pathways, and reference to the Amazon, underline the poet's prophetic earth. By "river" we would mean the Severn or the Dee, but after temporizing "river," and "depot" with "roadway," "airport" and "railway," the specifics of DDT as a moral, physical poison intend the world system. Reference to protein suggests flights of birds as oracles.

When a fruit falls from its tree and lies in rottenness it is food for wasps who feed off the sweet decaying flesh. This is the vision of the birds of <u>Ezekiel 39.17</u>f that appears here.

Part of an efflorescence written in the late 70's in Austin this poem first appeared online within a month of <u>Angel Standing in the Sun</u>, also at that time. Both occur together in that same verse in <u>Revelations 19</u>: And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the great banquet of God, but not to forget Ezekiel 39.11f of that banquet first.

## **BANQUET OF GOD**

First in the soles of feet, up into legs and groins,

The crux that leaps, forbidden flower employed

Enflames a sleep. Throw out those books, Torn papers encrust stone, one walking looks

To where a page of poems brood Outlined by, ah, the underlined, bright rood.

Home roadway, airport railway, factory, We eat our fill in earth's refectory. We have a sewage problem Amazon, Piped to our cities. We long for you River of the world to eat our fill, If you can contain the products of our will.

There is a problem, surely it has been a problem.

One lay across the thwart, the heart, the bleeding stem,

Bled, burned. The boat? The bellowing ash of earth.

There walked children whose eyes gave mirth

To masses who saw their death and died, So look upon the faces with unaverted eyes.

The grass caught fire, lept trees, on fire his hair,

On fire the man you will see running there.

He leapt into a pool of sparks, redux, burning coals became a barbecue. All cows were happily so consumed, goats lept Upon grills, sheep tendered their loins and slept.

Burn heavens, light mountains now you candles,
Drain rivers, seas drain, or were you vandalized?
Awake cave dwellers, for once upon a time in meadow, grove and stream you unapparelled find in celestial light, the forest wrong, At first the groves but then the trees are gone.

And the song, of outlandish devils shame, Imbedded from the mast of earth, who blames?
The flavor is an appetizing boil, Charcoaled, grilled to ash, unspoiled.
Our meat was in the fire cooking Consumed throughout. How's that looking?

Pigs, chickens gave them up to farce, Alone among foods, vegetables last dished. There is a hunger now, would you be warned?

There is a thirst, you should not go unarmed.

So the world turns, the daily sight Continues its delight.

Silence pipettes in radioactive milk, Nonsense takes a mercury sandwich, silt, But no DDT. Don't spare the topsoil, Stung before dismembering. No microbes toil.

No sky will fall nor mountain cease to clap When hands, though terrors, possess not this abstract.

Here proclaim a time when meadow, grove and stream

Were filled, backfilled, trucked off. What does it mean?

Authorized, certified, entirely official, Back to nature we got an administrative bushel.

There man can better himself If not by worth he takes the earth by stealth. Good funding institutes these bonds Where Procter and Gamble compose a split gene round.

Pyruvate phosphatase\* the daily song repeats,

Science and business sing. No defeat For cruelty.

The knowing herd, the drifting dark Comes to noon, sun shines, burns heart.

Tear turf, rip ravines, ruined cities judge first

yourself. This is the way that God is just. When business empires whiten without, There within clerks and executives, doubt Inks margins to encroach the light, Which sport enables the approaching eon night.

Look, this is hell and there the savior walks Among coals, pitted ruins, idle talk. There it was among industrialists He leaned into rubbish, proved to exist This token of hope against war, to tell How first with angel fire the first trump fell.

Still it's a bit ticklish, the feeling

When the hair falls out as the skin is peeling.

Admit it. Trees never had leaves. The telling those old wives' tales must cease.

Come over for the visit, the erosions' not too bad,

It's not the flash, it's the light and shock that's sad.

We lost a third part of the atmosphere. Nothing was spared. There was a sale at Sears.

The innocent working bee, bacterial spring, The inward warmth, tree rings, The cynic died a horrid death, We saw him as he was, unstaunched and luminous.

Lover's bone to sinew broken, ligaments Peacefully expired, the hair fell into place. You mistake. Ignorance feels nothing. What returns? Iniquity, cowardice, slumping.

Why think a heart of beef, calves' liver Less human than this pumping gesture?

When I cut the heart into usable pieces, I mean when I sought experimental protein For the lab of judgment there was no meat At all, fatty substance unusable, sweet, Outpoured ill got sentiment, I never knew just what it meant. Rain fire clouds, smoke heartily ravines Lift continents angelic gravities. Juggle its pieces into air, Time's filled, there is no way the earth were spared. We shall not say it was the fault of man. No man indeed. Indeed it was no man.

Come all to this great supper, press wine, And heavenly birds you also come to dine. One Pompeii blast or Ceres' quake will bend

The fine earth, shake, lift sea and hems. There is another sphere, come worms and flies,

Raveners to great sacrifice.

From pits come vultures, eagles come to fish,

The lambs must wait now man is the dish. Earth cleansed, war with him has gone, Come beasts, coyotes, dogs and learn to carnivore.

Come bear, panther, bobcat find your spouse

And breed, the earth's your wedding house.

Progeny extinct, come poison fish.
Mercury snakes from inert wood.
Calculate the final layer of mud
Where even the bacteria find no food.
This witness from the art invite
But banquet first, this food is ripe.

When once at the predicted end of time Forgiven my sins and rhyme Certified, I came to the wedding, Rose in the mist, spread across a flooded plain,

It seemed the ghost of all the souls who died

Mammalian successors and antecedents sighed.

Come to the palpable spirit wreck ghosts swarmed air like soundless bees to seek

The million million stings themselves, It was no cries with which the air was filled. Air smokes and solid forms melt. Was there a sun? Not that my senses felt.

Stone ran a common river, molten steel

a monument when it congealed. The night air cooled,

there was an evening breeze,

O attic shape, what pipes and timbrels these?

Who comes to sacrifice? What have they forged?

Thus my earth hungered even while it gorged.

## **NIGHTINGALE**

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) took an MA at Cambridge, center of conversion and fantasy fusing Puritanism and Platonism in his experience. Otherworldly wisdom appeared in his allegory of beauty in present life. Spenser invented the visionary princess intending that the lower would attract the single highest good. Filled with counterfeits and impersonations, shrines and anti-

shrines, *The Faerie Queene* attracts because it is like the true in that the true attracts doubles, inverted likenesses, reflections, embodiments and antitheses that reveal the thirst for perfection, but at each step error is possible because the soul does not know its true aim until it is achieved. Beyond the false is the true, and beyond the true is the glory of Beauty. Spenser shows the soul after having left its wings in another place to find its lover. Here it sees the potential and more beautiful self as some say that the first Venus is the Angelic Mind in contemplation of Divine Beauty and the Second Venus the generation of the Anima Mundi.

Two ideas of Platonic shadow and reflection occur in Beatrice and Virgil that seek to procreate the image of the Divine of the Second Venus. The lover seeing in the lady his potential and more beautiful self conceives out of Spenser an invention we have witnessed for more than four hundred years. Every part of the poet's experience summons weavings common to that era.

Whether any of this is true beyond the power it inhabits in its followers in universities and writing, we ask whether it all serves some other purpose to divert the contemplation away from the Truth, as if we are doubting the whole of civilization as a construct of diversion. Do not ask what is the whole, counterfeit or real. Here we only explore the paradigm.

Multiple strands weave consciousness. We ignore some to focus on others. In the midst of necessity, choice and circumstance break in. Nightingale describes what Spenser would call private allegory made public, a separation of two loves in the Persephone myth that in some psychological way evidences love enveloping and ennobling what we are. In the pun on Dis Old Wales plies this separation. He writes in the background and foreground of the poem while not writing. The letters demonstrate a hiatus of the affair as much as of work. All that conspires of a winter visit fuels Nightingale, but as C. S. Lewis says of private allegory, we cannot plumb the details without a guide. The events of the myth concern a love of plants sprinkled with memories rediscovered in letters, poems, journals. The facts are almost miracles by then that preoccupy their lives.

Written in Spenserian stanzas of *The Faerie Queene*, one of the great poems in English, a form well suited to romantic verse, a vast invented historical and classical myth Shelly borrowed to write *Adonais*, Keats *The Eve of St. Agnes* and Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, but the first statement about Spenser and the Elizabethans is that their Platonic world of idea and archetype is to make the ineffable visible lest you forget the blooms.

The Biblical experience is coitus. Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, as *Song* begins, a biblical poetic and prophetic speech. Auden tells Spender, "because you are so infinitely capable of being humiliated. Art is born of humiliation" (*World*, 47). When the rabbi says *Bereshith* is the first word of Genesis because the people did not want the Egyptians to know the name Elohim, the incompetent *and* humiliated move on to the *haShamayim*, the heavens.

The neo-platonic feel of the Latin "Nightingale" cast in Spenserian stanzas, is unlike the austere Welsh, but Caesar records that Gallic Celts claimed descent from Dis, a corresponding deity of underworld (Annwn), no doubt after the Greek. Nightingale would seem out of sync with these austerities, later than 16<sup>th</sup> century in terms of color as well. Whole lives, communities, states and have been built upon corrupt systems, tainted with inversion. What is the opposite of the ineffable? The Definable, knowable utterance, which by its particular revelation is the most ineffable thing to know. Go figure. Designs calculated to fulfill a directive serve its own protocol, being survival and maximized profit. Altruism and idealism are incapable of government. On the other hand, the explosion of fantasy, paradox and color of the ineffable goes hand in hand with the "catastrophic conversion" those pietist puritan

minds experienced that made every fact supernatural too.

### **NIGHTINGALE**

I.

Prince Edmund sang in metered rhyme to these

Nine lines tuned from Italian romance,
Now I begin the numbers thus to please
The mind and occupy the sense:
If Shelley, Byron, Keats could take the chance
To try to muster time to his desire,
So now a living wight will join their dance;
See how the dark that was once so dire,
May yet revive and kindle new a sea of fire.

II.

And seas of fire even yet we'll know, As Beowulf stands beside the burning mere Of plumb immensity before he'll go
Into the vast abysm without fear,
And wonders if that watery bed's his bier
Before he draws a breath of earth's sweet air
And dives into the darkness of the mere:
Just so I reckon it's not comfort's lair,
Unless it be to seek a grand adventure there.

# III.

So as the numbers fall from one to ten,
To climax twelve within a single line,
And then my bubbles surface to you friend,
Think nothing less than nothing if you find,
That nothing's gained when nothing has been rhymed:

As sunlight on the shining sea is seen In glints and glimmers, each a different kind, So like diffracted light must now I seem A wretch that seeks to hold a beauty that's unseen.

#### IV.

Fair, loving beauty, how within the dark You seem like Grendel's dam behind the mask Of waters I approach to hellish barks. Is it the hound or hounds of hell whose task Was lately muzzled and their jaws held fast By Heracles? The heroes go before, And at the end of time who follows last Of all to the already closing door Will hear the whispering waters then become a roar.

V.

Enough lament, now turn we to the theme, Whose gentle guide the gentle only bear, For she will rage and yet she's beauty's queen, Who though unknown and black is yet so fair That you will give your very life to dare The deepest mire, lacking but yourself, And leave the labor of this life's poor care, To reach the glory of her wondrous wealth: Nor will I wait to go for honor, fame or health.

## VI.

Her name is Nightingale whose story's known To start while she was gazing at a stream, Where sudden from within his stygian home She by the murky Dis at first was seen, To be so fair, so fit for ravishing, For he of late was boasting of his power Imperious to Love, so that Love deemed To fire than cranky heart with his soft arrow: So fired, away Dis flew to pluck this fairest flower.

#### VII.

I cannot guess what only Dis may know, He may be though most blind from what he's caught, But he could learn from Merlin in the stone, Who in unguarded moment's pose would oft Then teach to her that which himself was taught,

Might wish him that he never took to wife, But sought the happy apple boughs aloft, For now she binds him in the stone: a strife Forever ceasing so that now begins for life.

## VIII.

Fell-fated that moment thus Nightingale Interred long night, for there the dragon sits, But she behaved herself, nor would she be Enamored of his being of the pits, Oh could she somehow quench his burning fits!

But Dis then with his jenny round her wound A muslin of his own thick mystic wits, Her gold and red and green he turned to brown,

Not even now, nor then, has remedy been found.

# IX.

Now you who've never been below should know

The trees and grass are black with ageless time,

A kind of moss grows there, no holy wells nor snow,

But many pomegranates grow, they line The path descendant, but no other sign Of life is found save that within the fruit: Then dusky Dis these seeds made into wine, And calling forth his slave with Orphee's lute, With this sad song and drink made thus to her his suit.

X.

Forget the ivory dawn my dear, forget The grain and corn that still the earth must love,

Come take to you a deathless art and let Us to each other silently so prove With wordlessness, no witness tell, nor move To any tales how our hearts knit, nor give Account of what we do, nor say how wove This fabric of our garment. Unquestioned Thus our love will die, so it must dying live.

## XI.

Much like a transformed beast the winded Dis Then seemed to Nightingale so bright, Twice lucid were his eyes that promised bliss, Would she but deign to leave the world of light,

And take the jewel he hung before her sight, Oh if she'd only known that this his plight Of troth was remedy of his design, To keep her in his arms himself throughout all time.

#### XII.

Of these the arms plutonic poets sing, When in a verse the beauty that they see, Like rubies set within a silver ring, That speak of passion and of ecstasy,
But also pain of our mortality,
They fit with cunning words to their design,
And lift each one to his eternity,
So in the moment's transport of a line,
We change not and forget the ebb and flow of time.

#### XIII.

So struck and rapt love's heaven in his eyes, No wit nor thought could pull her from the dream,

Transfixed, her heart could bare hold back its sighs,

Her lips would part and close, and as she seemed

To break, then melt, and forge anew, he deemed

Another time to stop her veiled trance, For he slacked not: would she then be his Oueene?

For like her he unsought had struck Love's chance,

This done they might together wed themselves and dance.

## XIV.

Perhaps you think it easy to decide 'Tween life and death, the choice a simple one, If so this innocent you'll surely chide, Who yet will sit beside a seely hun, For she moved not: oh lift your skirts and run, The chorus sings, seek meadows, the daystar, Oh choose the lovely beams, the golden sun, Cast darkness from you lest the world so far

From night your mind forget and be forever barred!

#### XV.

So might of old Bathsheba counseled be, When David, King, Beloved by God's own heart,

Royal lion finding her so fair, he Sought to have the joy and sweetest part Of this life with the next: the arrow's dart Took him as he took her, but who could say Himself so pure than when his own thoughts start

To tend to love, that satisfied today, Tomorrow would not be where he before did lay?

# XVI.

She drank, she drank, who cares to speculate Argues chiefly of her own volition, Endeavors she despaired of other state, Persevers that she thought it was her mission, Or that she did it from her heart's compassion, To lose her life, and that without a doubt, To drink the cup and thus her own perdition, But in the seed within begin to sprout, Then in the ripened boughs at harvest time the shout

## XVII.

Within her breast in winter sweetly sing: My root is in the earth, I seek the sun, I love all growth, the green bud in the spring, And summer's flower aging have I won, What in my maidenhood was overcome, For now I know what my green heart then guessed,

That if I die so then I rise again, The greater world to bring into the less, And since my love is ever in the earth: yes, yes.

# XVIII.

But the Aegean story intervenes, For Greek Zeus, the so-called king and god, Consulting with the powers then decreed That since our Nightingale would choose to sod

The earth Olympian feet would seldom trod, She could but half the year her wish fulfill: The other half, said he, lifting his rod, She spends with him inside the blooming hill, And underground his secrets learn whene'er she will.

# XIX.

But here is transport to a different clime, From that on earth wherein we pass our days, Where loutish verse on earth or hell could shine,

As heaven's pale when covered o'er with haze, Must, when the wind has changed reveal its maze

Of tunnels, caverns, secret doors and seek The dark wherein the fragrant unblown waves Of time are still, familiar world, but bleak, Eternity compared, beyond compare, makes weak

#### XX.

The bold who drive their flocks inland from sea:

So with the very vision's rise they fall
Who climb Olympus' height, now so do we,
Into the wondrous night again, and all
Our kind remember what we barely saw,
For colors fade and red goes from the leaf,
This paradox inscribed on heaven's wall:
What has no arms, no legs, no skin, no teeth:
And if you answer it you turn to joy from grief.

## XXI.

So as the lonely Dis had her consent,
To fold him in these loving ways, his thirst
Increased to measure hopefulness had meant
To slack, but who can speak of it, the first
Of love is known the best, the last the worst,
Nor did he doubt that in his passion's fire,
The seed of love that Cupid's arrow nursed,
Would of the stygian snake and dark so dire,
Weary of his bed and snakey ways, she'd tire.

## XXII.

Come then my fair and only love to guide My thought return back to its sober theme, Let us back to hell, where lurks the pride Of this dark majesty, his loving queen, The burning lake and Cerberus, who seem Like phantoms here beside unchanging gods, But in no change, that's death, if right I deem My destiny within the heavenly log, For so also we'll want to know aged Pluto's dog.

#### XXIII.

Come now sweet Edmund, be my human muse And balm of thought that gives a verse its high Epithalamion, for you did choose To pierce the veil of love and there abide In piteous looks and groans and softer sighs, Come now into these lines with gentle taste: Then sudden did I hear Nightingale cry, Within the bower see her raptured face, And then I felt my nerves on fire and my blood race.

## XXIV.

Say first the gowns which of themselves let fall Onto the floor, his all of black with stars Quick-fired in many hues, that it was all Light, some burning blue, some red, sapphires,

Lightning winks that children in a jar Might seek to keep till morning then let loose, And in gold thread outlined that heavenly car Of old, once let to Phaethon by Zeus, That ran the stellar regions then fell from its abuse.

#### XXV.

Hers was a gown of green and gold that wove The scenes of pastoral life, of herds and sheep, Of grain and glade and stream that she did love:

Those rippling fields of gold and whitened wheat

So seemed to move and slowly beat In measure to soft winds, though lying still, And in the midst a lady kept her seat, As from her hair a crown of stars down spilled Light to a crescent moon whereon her feet were still.

## XXVI.

Then in that unlit room there came a light, Effused in general, near the bed to start, And opened outward as it seemed my sight Were changed to some unknown and fragrant part

Of smell: it was the music of their art, And all seemed turned to rose, oh shade of love,

For then I felt it enter at my heart, As if it overflowing then must prove A vast and fired boundlessness to make me love.

# XXVII.

Not like a gold or flaming light it came, But in the soft effulgence lovers' wear, When they, struck in some muse upon the game

That lovers' play, will seem to be thrice fair, So that they then will glow with colors rare When by a passing stranger they are seen, Who thinks that they a robe of light must wear:

Who does not know what such delight will mean

When one from love's embrace by passers-by is seen.

## XXVIII.

But though I stood beside the very veil Wherein they lay, I could not see within, For it was dark and thus my vision frail, But then the rosy light that there had been Became a deepest blue, whose gentle motion Makes me no longer able to describe What seems profane compared to their devotion,

So then to everything my sense there died, And I into those gentle waves myself did glide.

# XXIX.

Nor are these marvels all that we can tell, For still the chamber must we yet describe, With walls of porphyry translucent, Hell Had no likeness to it, for on its sides Reflected were strange writings so inscribed That backwards could be read what ne'er is fit For human eye to read, and we'll not try To fathom more, lest we untimely trip Our lives from earth and fall to darkness in our wit.

# XXX.

But fate demands that vision prophesy

What already ancient poets had known, Nor would for Dis dare any justify That joy, the Nightingale, should leave his home,

That she into the springing plants would grow, While he alone, translucent by himself, Would blast with mellow sigh and endless groan,

So that it ever tried the darkest health, When into bright sunlight and life she took his wealth.

## XXXI.

Then did I see him pine about his desk, For there of old, this loneliness his curse, Would he engrave in fire to metal pressed, As if he thought to fill her heart with verse, Renewing themes upon the wedding hearse, So to bemuse his late and favored wife, Who may have thought that her fair heart would burst,

For men will turn with each sweet shaking sight,

But still he loved and unto her these words would write:

# XXXII.

My dear, almost alone I spend the night With thoughts of you, but they are more than thoughts,

In my imagination is the sight
Of your soft eyes o'erlaid in azure, wrought
With gold which in my heart I lock, as fraught
With gold and precious ore below, whose veins
Of light may winter in a star, but not

Above, which others sleep I watch the lane, And wait until the long days, weeks and months will wane.

#### XXXIII.

When I'm asleep then you're awake, thus cold Time conforms us all, for it and space Conspire against us and so more bold I conjure you on earth a faster race Around yourself, that I may soon your face Of love and more to warm your lips and breasts,

Draw honey from your heart, whose last embrace

I ne'er forget as we inside love's nest Did linger and draw out of time to very fete.

#### XXXIV.

Put on the royal robes I once gave you When on that new moon night our minds first met,

There is the likeness to compare the hue Of your rare beauty, thought that you set In fiery letters, though the lips were wet, And told in silence simple things you heard Inside my brain: for when all words were let Alone, most still your thought was clear, no word

Related, only thought as then your thought I heard.

## XXXV.

So thus I number, use up, another day

Until, regained again, those precious bowers That in you lie; this dalliance of praise Will speed the shortened seasons' powers, For as I sing away will while the hours: And see your image cast within my breast Of roses, ivy, amaranth and flowers, For there we soon will hope to find a rest When into flowers, buds and stems myself I press.

## XXXVI.

Whoever would awake from this sweet bliss, Sure cannot say, there isn't time to tell How long it lasts, so long as lovers kiss I guess, but in the dark I heard a bell, And thought that of the strange new sights of hell

I'd miss not one, so roused went out to see, And when I left those yet within were well, For they were rapt in love nor would miss me As out into the passageway I passed quickly.

# XXXVII.

As ghastly meditations strike the mind Of those who've died, when silent in the tomb They from the ways of life themselves unwind, For then they enter in a greater womb, Where deities of light cause them to swoon, The peaceful and the wrathful ghosts to see, All images they feared while in earth's room, So now within the dark such thing fright me As through the narrow tunnels of hell pass quickly.

## XXXVIII.

The tinkling bell, the wrinkled dark, the seams Of darkness sown, as in a critic's eye, Are moats he'd wish to cross, but though he lean

Into himself will find no boat, so I Give him free passage in a breaking rhyme. Take everything and do not leave a bit, Nor wonder if you better spend your time In ancient books, there find a better fit, In dusty works of old a better knit.

#### XXXIX.

As when in darkness one may see the light, So down the passageway I went to look, And wide my arms outstretched to feel what sight

Denied, and if you're bored even with this book,

Then join you in the quest, study forsook Finds discovery, feel the jagged stone, So hand in hand with this poor verse a crook To guide those sheep who think what they must know,

We all with shorn and coldest limbs from life must go.

# XXXX.

And these are lines of ordinary men, Who eat and sleep and love and wake and dream,

Who thus remember one thing out of ten, And even then in error they may seem With shades to live, with idle thoughts to teem, Utopias, Arcadias they would, For who of better worlds would not oft dream, And yet we this have not full understood, For we are men who sought to grasp all that we could.

#### XXXXI.

Some letters on the darkened walls by torch I saw, as stumbling over carcasses and bones I began to pass into the tunnels porch, And did not think, but still could hear the moans

Of those who tripping, fell upon Hell's stones, And fallen once they never rose again, Then did I first begin to feel dark tones, When I unknowingly into the den Of Cerberus had gone, the dog that knows not men.

## XXXXII.

I recognized, but then it was too late,
The tinkling bell that in a dream I heard,
And feared that bell rang then my mortal fate,
That on its collar rang when that dog stirred,
But then a thought, more like an imaged word
Appeared and spoke, but not out loud, in
thought,

There came a growl as if the dog had grrred, And up it sprang and in its mouth then caught A turquoise ring which to my trembling hands it brought.

# XXXXIII.

What marvel is it that I am not slain, For then I thought this terror to befriend, As when Odysseus to spare his pain, So that against the Cyclops better fend, Hid in the belly of the sheep to wend A way to freedom underneath its back, As now unto this fearsome beast I bend, Since him from myself I would detach, And in its belly's fur I placed my hand to scratch.

# **OLD BARN**

Many were the nights I had seen stars, Each there among the flowers daring smelled Riches I find only in your arms. Let me not desire any other In all these hours, and come beloved, None many hereafter this know you so well.

And if I may not leave this prison,
Move there like grain in an old barn,
But stored from habitation and old age,
Rooms I keep under the apple tree
Of stone, where I await my love's
return,

**S**o to rest in her arms under appley boughs,

In fair a wanton, thus my Queen Used to hide me in the woodland, So that when death took everyone Still it did never call me.

# **TALIESIN**

Now time ends its season

Illustrates the heaven,
Silent the storms of blood,
Eight times the letter proved.
Intent on it he stands,
Listening to his God,
As lost men stop for towns,
Throats clearing, tongues kindling flame.

The bodhisattva twice returned,
Above heaven learned,
Love's sacrifice saves men,
Jesus, creation's Lord, and heaven's.
Every people, lands and men
Shall look on him they pierced,
Irate behold rejected come,
Neighbors and saints judge all earth.

Taliessin, bard countenance
All of your fame has not been lost
Long did you serve a king, Urien
Rheged

Inside a bag among bull rushes
Elphin the Prince took up this gift
Somber the bards of the isle of Britain
So long without peer in the eye of the
west

In praising the God of Creation.

Nine are the letters in the name of Taliessin

# **Notes**

- -Taliesin means shining brow.
- -Rheged means gift.
- -Taliesin was found in a fishing weir.
- -Elphin is the son of Rheged.
- -The bards are somber because of his excellence.
- -Taliesin is a double s in the Welsh.

# **SONG OF THE WIND**

Once like a light in a sculpted city under fallow That now lies dark ground, So once the land unknown was full and free, With cedarn hill and golden meadow found. went toward the I traveled to dawn, sun To see this marvelous land, and it was good, But there I saw a siege works and a gun, Within the nation tops of watchtowers stood.

I went from the mountains to mourn the nations, destruction and to grieve the fury, the death. for over them I saw terror advancing, destruction from fear from the south, the north Below there stretched a molten lake, be the blood of Which sunset proved to men, of a horse's bridle, It rose to the height with the rain. And flowed away

I looked in the holy book, inquired

After this fair land,
I sought thus many
But I had no eyes
Wars of Magog,
and lands,
Decrees of pestilence
hailstones,
Fire and valleys of bone
book,
This knowledge was

its destiny, days and nights, with which to see. northern powers

and blood

and I closed the

too much for me.

I sat to await
When I heard
And turned to see as if
water,
And saw the form
I was lifted upward
There it was, between
heaven,
I saw all things were
Which I read not for
come.

the tumult's fall a voice of thunder, one called from

of a man. from the sun, the earth and

written in a book, they are soon to

Then one said, these people Son of man hear? I cried for grace fire

need a warning, how shall they

but his eyes were

That pierced the cloud my fear.

You shall go lest

doom.

You shall go.

bitterly

When his hand

Yes, I said, here I am

What is the fate

people,

Will they win in the end?

How far does

What is not written

age,

But the warning

But lands turned inland

Yes LORD, will you not

beautiful,

Lest the day come

not?

where I had hid

they escape their

Though I feared

was thus upon me, LORD, sent me.

of the beautiful

What of the siege, the field extend? is told alone by

is not for them, far from sea. send me to the

and they know it

Such a strong people, Theirs is a marvelous land, others, and handsome

good above

Shall they not hear voice?

Amen and Amen, There thy voice I know this peoples'

beauty,

But their foreheads A diamond shall

Thy words a new Lest they hear me word,

I give thee the vision And he gave me

to see with,

And a written scroll warning word.

I opened my mouth

scroll knew the words And warning to

I took.

the warning

so be it then, shall dwell. boundless

are as flint. thy forehead be,

sharped sword, and restore my

of the land. a colored glass

to speak the

and ate the

that it spoke the people thus

# **NEWS**

He is coming!
The sky is clear.
But it was beginning to rain
When sun disappeared.
For the city of heaven
You had to have rain
before it got near.

Time altered its shape.
First in the dark,
trees with somber trunks
rhymed within, lined the rim,
twisted with drought,
quarreled with rock.

Noah town was beginning to set when Moses said Jesus was outside town And Abraham and Angels were flying around.

# **EMBASSY**

On the road ahead to the unbelievable event, it's too late to wonder how I got to be singing a King who inspires the young to fruition when they are old.

Maybe it was in the sky, two hands holding gold flares,

but who had any idea what it was?
A Turner, call it an angel burning thirty years before my waking who knew what was seen,
Prompted by a night's dream, realized long after seeing, incapable of saying such a thing.

When a King comes
we lose our heads dancing,
extravagant souls
who love that appearing
of a Hero preceded a long way
by of
embassies delight.

# **Breath**

When it comes to talk
everything is song,
a water breath for gills
breathes song and sings,
breathe song and sing,
they sing, they sing,
Everything has breath.
Everything that has breath.

Everything with breath connects beneath the silent disconnect, pure as flame that disappears in sight and sound forget.

It comes to all who breathe that water breath, gill song, a temporary exhalation that everything else that will have breath is breathing all along.

Yourself, to meditate a roof below, communes a creature like no other, so unique at times at least to say no matter what I knew that day when everything had breath. Here I am.

Breath inspires talk,
language, expression, thought,
suddenness of wings,
a base of wind, of dust and sun,
cry of a moment, each moment timed,
three hundred eternal
breaths with the same.

Anything that's done or so recalls is breathing the same breath as all. That's what breath in search of talk like any unique thing means, Sound of breath.

Everything seeks song unconfined, for air and water breathers' breath of gills breathe life, breathe song and sing.

They sing.
They sing.
Everything has breath.
Everything has breath.
Everything that has breath.

## Note

It sounds like our own lives when the editor of the Facsimile of 1910, J. Gwenogvryn Evans, says none has suffered like the text of Taliesin: "hundreds of lines have been marred in transcription. Syllables, words, clauses, sentences, lines have been dropped, prefixes, endings, and catchwords repeated or substituted for the original phrasing." Heroes are measured in epithets. No incident is completely described. Descriptions of battle are heightened with fusion from *true* poems, "kindled" from an oral history. Biblical and prophetic subjects, mythologies, riddles, proverbs, elegies and praises in the mead hall were all added to elements from a ninth century saga and twelve elegies of the sixth. Archaism and anachronism occur in "Song" where the association is broadened from the three hundred to the later poet Sion Eos. Verse forms that did not exist in either sixth or twelfth century Wales occur when poetic translations get the last word, from Charles Williams' Taliessin through Logres (1938) to the Matter of Britain of Tennyson's Taliessin.

The *Gododdin* relates (c. 580) that three hundred mounted assaulted ten thousand Anglo-Saxons on foot. Taliesin must have heard an early version or

discussed the battle from echoes to the *Gododdin* in "On the Death of Three Hundred" and "Song." In continual reimagining he wanders among the fallen of "bright Gwynedd's horde" composing in and out of body. In "Field" the narrator elegizes the fallen by the first light of day, and after, as "long the days and long the nights I held this image in my mind of red on gold." The "flowers" and "furrows," "sweep the valley to a glade." He repeats "bright battalions with their blue bright swords," the "white lances," "steel blades by heaps of dead." "Already ravens were croaking above blood." They are all killed in the glade that "thunders one hill" and "rests its back into the ground so still." We don't know who comes "at last no more from my grave." It cannot be the narrator since the song must be finished in "bleeding to sing this song." That return at dawn the next day, when two die, gave "a second way." Who "strolled, arm and arms in the glade," one arm severed, but still carrying a sword? It suggests a surrogate, and not Aneirin either, some other whose name we don't know, the unknown soldier whose pay is to "bend and shake like the corn." Three is a poetic number. One stands for three and three for three hundred and three hundred for them all.

The sublimated garden where the "Red Head" is both annual and perennial, grows from root and seed to symbolize the late blooming that prolongs and foreshortens the life, the bloom "that died alone in the sunlit plain...that will not return alone." This is the "crimson head in the spring-brightened loam." Death "only increases their yield." "I lay on the bloody field, I it was who bled." It describes the shed

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blood as "barley feed" and himself a plough man "rich in cultivation," a farmer of the fallen. Survival then burial is implicit in the muscle twitching after death, "the grasses, the aired bodies, stir about the break of day." He calls them first flowers, then grasses, then flowers of purple blades.

The sonnets in praise of Jesus, rough and smooth Welsh timbers craving for the worship of God and many more mysterious poems added to the elegies such as "The Branch" might reread, "When the Lord of All descended into death." "The Plant" and "Love-Lies-Bleeding" sublimate to complete the meditation of red on gold. "The Plant," is as unknown as the soldier, who "though you know me not," "grows nearer to "where my Lord his veins let flow." That he bleeds "with him for he loves the world," repeats that "He loves the world with his own shed blood" which produces "these seeds he would sow," in the redemption of the world.

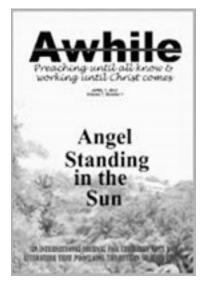
"Angel Standing in the Sun," is related to *The Fire of Love* of Richard Rolle, where the song of angels resounds, signifying union with divine love. The editor of *Penny*, George Dance, suggests "on one level, it's a literal (vision of an) angel seen in the sun...on another, the last line makes me think of Southwell's vision of "The Burning Babe" - that (and the son/sun pun) get me to read it as a poem to Jesus, which works well on a Good Friday. Then there's the foreshadowing of Schwartz's poem, and its "Time is the fire in which we burn", which gets me thinking about life itself as a process of controlled burning."

The poem first appeared in A Calendar (1973) as "On Turner's Angel Standing in the Sun, 1846." Viewing the painting at the Tate Gallery after Calendar's appearance, the last words of that brilliant colorist J. M. W. Turner come to mind, "the sun is god." Unfortunately for the Sun King (le Roi Soleil) of the modern Louis VIV at his assembly in Versailles and sycophants of Apollo who construe the Jordan Lead Codices as figures of Christ, or the French president Emmanuel Macron declaring he will govern France like Jupiter, the Roman king of the gods and even the American president Donald Trump's image of Apollo in his golden penthouse, there will be no Golden Age. This epiphany the Dayesman comes to judge. Then comes the feast of the birds and the burial of Gog that takes 7 months, whose weapons provide firewood for 7 years.

Theophanies debating whether these were angels or in fact the One appearing, the likeness of the heart to fire and light and its reception in images of color and sound in the *heart of man* of line 2 of "Angel," renew in the next to the last line, *my heart*, in which brightness is all the end of life. The wings of angel's gold, *beings light radiant of golden man*, like appearances to Daniel, Jacob or Abraham, are the brightness and glory of the First Begotten. The Daysman of Judgement (Job 9.33) of the angel in the event that follows, which word appears in the 1551 edition of 1 Samuel 2:25 of the English Version of the Bible translated "dayes-man," in Tyndale's translation for Exodus 21:22 reads, "He shall paye as the dayesmen appoynte him" (as the "judges")

determine"). So hence the Son of Man is "the dayspring from on high" of Luke 1.78, titled in Peter the First Begotten. The speaker's heart is consumed in His fire, for Our God is a consuming fire. The True Light That Lights everyone who comes into the world includes John's injunction, "Wake up, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." He is the Only Begotten and First Begotten, "First born among many brethren" (Romans 8.29).

The Matthew Henry Commentary says Christ has many crowns, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is arrayed in a vesture dipped in his own blood, by which he purchased his power as Mediator: and in the blood of his enemies, over whom he always prevails. His name is The Word of God; a name none fully knows but himself; only this we know, that this Word was God manifest in the flesh; but his perfections cannot be fully understood by any creature. Angels and saints follow, and are like Christ in their armor of purity and righteousness. The threatenings of the written word he is going to execute on his enemies. The ensigns of his authority are his name; asserting his authority and power, warning the most powerful princes to submit, or they must fall before him. The powers of earth and hell make their utmost effort. These verses declare important events, foretold by the prophets. These persons were not excused because they did what their leaders bade them. How vain will be the plea of many sinners at the great day! We followed our guides; we did as we saw others do! God has given a rule to walk by, in his word; neither the example of the most, nor of the chief, must



influence us contrary thereto. He is the glorious Head of the church, is described as on a white horse, the emblem of justice and holiness.

As a sonnet, rhyming in triplets at that, not a venial sin, "Angel" may offend polities and pieties. The editor of *Awhile*, had already invited the author to repent: "If

you have not truly repented, we advise you to do so, because the Master may return the next moment, and it wouldn't be so good for you to get others prepared but be left behind."

This is not to suggest that editor has knowledge of the hundred shortcomings and regrets so well established that a vow in the present to pay and repay the debt of kindness owed all living creatures always seeks to increase. I am grateful to *Awhile* for publishing both "Angel Standing in the Sun" and "The Plant" before others would. The editor further invites, should one more effort be admitted, "If your work is accepted up to three times you will be called into Awhile family as a Writer or an Artist." Which is not to be scorned for we do not receive many, if any, such invites.

A statement on Angel Standing in the Sun in the Turner Collection at the Tate Gallery indicates "this late <u>painting</u> shows the Archangel Michael appearing on the Day of Judgement with his flaming sword. In the foreground are Old Testament scenes

of murder and betraval: Adam and Eve weep over the body of Abel (left), and Judith stands over the headless body of Holofernes (right). Turner's pessimistic picture seems to show death is everywhere in this fallen world...he showed the painting with lines describing 'the feast of vultures when the day is done.' which is the biblical reference, "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God (KJV)." That supper is the subject of "The Banquet of God," displayed in the 20th anniversary edition of Ygdrasil, May 2013. Angel was on the cover of the first *Awhile*, a site out of Uyo Nigeria that was hacked pirated, repossessed, exceeded and expired. All the more reason to thank *Penny*.

"The Bright Extensive Will" also appeared at *Penny*, where *sons of angel light bow from out the sky*, blind in all their beams and enter creation, which resembles those in *Paradise Lost* with the First Begotten who "by the waters of life, where'er they sat / In fellowships of joy the sons of light hasted."

# Reflections

In looking for alternatives to war, peace oddly is on one hand and tyranny the other. War is the happy middle ground. Arms and the man fight for autonomy there.

#### **Door hardware De Turk House**

It just depends what side you are on. It wasn't called Wales then, but Cymru, or Cynwyd maybe, and it wasn't the language spoken among the known worlds west, but one of six, Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Manx, Welsh, Cornish and Breton. These wilds lost and their customs vaxxed under authority of conquerors, kings, castles and Romans, Germans, Saxon mercenaries, Angles, Scandinavian Vikings,



Northmen Normans don't have justice. Religion fuels the glory war god worship of giants and ancestors of Iron age religion, sacrifice and shamans. beginning to be replaced about the 6<sup>th</sup> with Christianity,

but the Iron gods revived among romantics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and on.

Given the vagaries of imagination I don't know if it would help or hurt to know a sense of destiny before the fact and not after its attainment, for vanity weed would choke the growth toward integrity. Spared the knowledge and only now piecing together the weaving of destiny and providence in many situations that shaped the writing of Red Head, like tumblers in a combination that only permit to open when safely past the last, this reveals in post cognition, a concept I did not know until dreamed, that every step of the way, were I to respond correctly, would reach the next. Thus following in faith founded in belief in the spirit of life, these events followed.

#### **Welsh Tract**

When I was 16 my family repatriated to Montgomery County where my father had been born and where his family had lived for 250 years. Mostly kept secret when moved to the Chartiers Valley at age of five, striking retro-cognitions were revealed to me. After growing up in Pittsburgh coal country we resettled in the Welsh Tract of Bala-Cynwyd PA 30 miles from those former lands of early Philadelphia I was to discover later in such detail. Red Head Llvr Taliesin would seem to have been being prepared long before to pursue these "translations," for we now lived in the Merion / Bala-Cynwyd of the Welsh Tract of Pennsylvania, settled in the 1680s by Welsh Quakers west of Philadelphia. Negotiated as a separate county to use the Welsh language, Bala in Wales is a small town in Cambia of the North and Cynwyd a village a few miles north-east along the river Dee. I then lived then in the center of a thing I

did not know until long after. "He has hemmed me in behind and before...such knowledge is too wonderful for me" (Psalm 139.5). Merion Friends Meeting is a walk from our door there and greets its visitors today with the words used in the title of my first regularly issued book, *The True Light That Lights*: "join the group as we settle into silence, with no pastor, no music, no order of service, not even any formal process to begin the meeting itself. We gather and wait together, seeking to feel the presence within of the Living Christ -- "the true Light that enlightens everyone."

## **Post Cognition**

The Welsh Tract is one block in the building of this building, doubly since within that environment my father mandated our family attend the Bala Cynwyd Church of the Covenant in whose influence I encountered the King of Glory. Trowel in that layer. After you meet this King you are changed so much that fore- knowing as a precognition, knowing without seeing, is not as great as knowing after seeing, understood as retro-cognition, for none of the parties know a thing inside and beside another is happening. In this way members of my family reinhabited the holy proximities of the Welsh a brief radius of thirty miles from the place where they had first and always lived.

How land can be made holy has to do with the people who live in it and their habits and meaning, for people can be holy too. It is easy to miss what is, so while Wales was a hotbed of radical and Jacobin sentiment, often linked to Nonconformist Protestant

congregations, these are not the beliefs that seeped the soil. Those were works of holiness of Welsh Quakers with signers of the agreement opposing slavery of Germantown.

Mennonites and Quakers of 1688: "And those who steal or rob men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike?... we who profess that it is not lawful to steal, must, likewise, avoid to purchase such things as are stolen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing, if possible...have these poor negroes not as much right to fight for their freedom, as you have to keep them slaves? From our meeting at Germantown, held the 18th of the 2d month, 1688.

# **Kelpius**

These Mennonites and Quakers embraced a doctrine of acceptance of the good to permeate their lives in the natural and the spiritual. Meditated with such thoughts as Methodists also began their lives Muhlenberg's Augustus Lutheran Church, Trappe, PA

in the new world with the travels of Wesley, and further by the Lutheran Muhlenberg and even Count Zinzendorf, and before them Pastorius,



Kelpius and so many, even if they manifest the contradiction of living holy that these Welsh

Christians were known for, it was just a little way from this Welsh Tract where I now lived down the Schuylkill a few miles to where Kelpius had been. If you read up on these folk you easily find doctrines important to their detractors to question, but we reserve that our accusers matter little to the King of Kings. Kelpius adds holiness to the ground which his letters prove and his very Quaker-like views on inward prayer. These are all what remain even if critics decode them mystically. Kelpius' idea of wilderness is the revelation of God.

George Conrad Beissel emigrated from Germany in early years of the 18th century intending to join Johannes Kelpius and his utopian community at their settlement of the Chapter of Perfection alongside Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia. Beissel was unaware that Kelpius had died some years prior, but he stayed a time, associating with surviving members of the community before moving, after some wandering to establish the Ephrata Cloister on the Cocalico Creek in Lancaster County around 1740, whose printing press printed the largest book of colonial Pennsylvania, the *Martyr's Mirror* of 1500 pages for the Mennonites,

-Ephrata Cloister and The Chapter of Perfection – are related in the compositions and hymns written by Kelpius and his followers and those of Beissel.

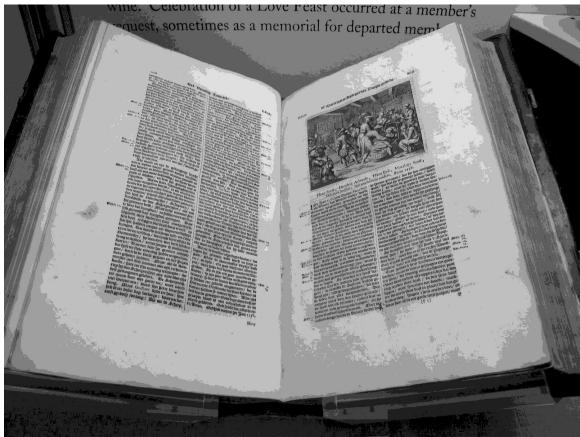
This is where we find the ideas of the restitution of all things, 181, and the birth of eternities, and Kelpius' three fold wilderness (letter to Hester Palmer, 86), of barren wilderness, fruitful wilderness and the Valley of Achor Wilderness of the Elect of God (89) of Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, Jesus the

Messiah, David, and Paul—all of the Wilderness—for "God has always prepared his most eminent instruments in the wilderness."

This more sensate and sublime writing than by Perry Miller or Charles Olson or Melville or Hawthorne or the divines of New England who feared the land, is what sinks down into the soil too, just the way G. H. Pember (*Earth's Earliest Ages*) said so that while counting up reprobates of the new world saints who lend their aura of peace and blessing to what Bala Cynwyd was all about, where streams cross the road and large cemeteries like West Laurel Hill house so many of mine who now wait atop the hills that look down on the Schuylkill, it is a land made holy by these folk, not a view known to pop, but it lives on after they are gone. None of these remained by the time Larrived.

If the land can be cursed it can be blessed, for it was in the "place where it was said," meaning the spoken word, but the word is the work the inhabitants say who hear that "you are sons of the living God" (*Hosea* 1.10). If the land, meaning the people, committed great whoredoms, (*Hosea* 1.2) that "make her as a wilderness and set her like a dry land" (2.3) then the image of land and person interpenetrate where they "shall be planted as trees by rivers of water" (*Psalm* 23), not a quality in the ground as it is in those who spread blessing from being there, like a maple tree does syrup, or God sits in his dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs (*Isaiah* 18.4). This life circulates in the branches of the tree the way birth permeates in the soil and produces many natural herbs who of

themselves make enzymes and change the soil like madrone and creosote or birch *Inonotus obliquus* has antiviral effect against the human immunodeficiency virus. That is, the plant affects the soil, and the people do too. In the invisible turning "valley of trouble, a door of hope" (Hosea 2.15) "I will sow her unto Me in the earth" (2.23). While these mean several things, they include a blessing on the land itself and on the people who inhabit after. So the Merion Welsh Ouakers sowed in Bala Cynwyd the Gwynedd friend meeting where by 1700 the Welsh made up a third of Pennsylvania's population, migrants mostly Quaker and Baptist. "Wales is to be considered as the parent of the Baptist denomination in Pennsylvania." These are beliefs that seep into the soil and my retro-cognition of landing there to within a year toencounter the King of Glory. You well ask what would such a Being want with a 17-year-old from coal country. You know the answer when you enter His gates with thanksgiving and come into His courts with praise.



Martyrs Mirror. Ephrata, 1749.

### The Art of Translation

Even if we say *brass nor stone but sad mortality o'er sways their power*, it is not the wit that remains, or the letter. What remains is the memory of the moment evoked. Even more than Shakespeare, Hopkins did not change the world, and if not he then who? *It will flame out, like shining from shook foil.* 

The poet becomes a translator of the light beyond the image, before, during and after the poem. It is not a literal translation. Nobody can say what it is because no original *text* compares. *The translation is the only text.* I heard a fly buzz when I died we don't know. *Irish poets learn your trade, sing whatever is well made.* Well made, not perfect.

Beauty in ugliness finds rest in the peace of the world. All kinds of sayings call them sulphur flowers in chemistry, fleurs du mal. This trial goes on carnivorously in des Esseintes' laboratory, the effete character of Huysmans. Beauty is not truth, nor truth beautiful. We have to suspend belief, or is that disbelief in the illusions of innocence before the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowel broken. Poets are wrestling with codes of outer expression against inspiration. Eventually beyond their making, the thing, the poem, is not. What now to do with our own annihilation when we look back at our lives and see nothing we recognize. Well there is one moment, repeated every day since even in the belly of death, especially there, or in bed.

The trouble is, having said this, I wrote on a card and taped it to the wall:

Beauty Forgiveness Truth

In fact there is no explanation at all for what happened. It took years to say this much. Every day electricity fills the cortex. Up on my feet again in the

back of that tent with no explanation I floated, walked out after maybe ten minutes utterly changed, inside and out.

# Cullen's Company

I shared space in those times with another inmate, **John Cullen, translator** in the afterlife of 50 books. Spender says nobody can understand the chat he and Auden had "with their mixture of sense and nonsense, fun and portentousness, malice and generosity, compose a secret language among a circle" (*World on Worlds* 57), which is what the many conversations around fires were that he and I shared then. The poems of *Calendar* and *Red Head* are addressed to intimates, confidants who get it and don't but are amused by the mumbling argot. To someone who knew the translator himself this would seem completely contradictory, if true. That's what experience gets us, or innocence. Is it innocence that longs to be made whole or experience?

Against the background of militaristic conceits of the unconscious in one of those poems of *Calendar* these two meet in a boot camp of dreams, for basic training is implied, which both had seriously avoided by different paths, John's scandalous perhaps, but funny -- mine a product that time and the age would allow, the meniscus ACL--but we had known each other before it seems, for one recognizes him there with some joy: "That is Cullen. Diddley-bop." They meet for a moment in the center of an apparition of friendship going past, even if their *Gemütlichkeit* exceeded what either would later know. This poem written before denouement properly forespeaks as

poems do. Can they enter by the strait gate of the poem into innocence or must they go by experience the great broad way? His last postcard from Florence to me:

Andrew- Greetings from Florence, which we are about to leave for Venice. As you know, being a world traveler isn't entirely without difficulty, but I'm glad that I retired early. Although weary of Madonnas, tapestries and the busts of Roman emperors I have spent whole days in the assurance that I was closer to the flame than ever before. I trust you are prospering in whatever outpost of civilization you have established for yourself. Do you think it's true that you can't go home again?

If the rites of this dream princess were too great an intimacy to share or speak of, in a flash the moment passes, prophetic itself of our lives, taken at large. Right away the training camp telescopes to graduation. They get their stripes in Cullen's Company. PhDs. The thing is organized. It has Officers and Review. Structure! No wonder he suddenly wakes up to an honorable discharge, but the thing is that the memory of the dream continues in the poem and when read the feeling of the dream in the first place is remembered. It revives its innocence there. No, you don't have to believe this. All of these poems are riddles to remember the moment. What they have to do for another remains to be seen. Idiots on the street say they have miles to go before they sleep. There are many kinds of translations one with another by which Enoch was not found, because Yahweh had translated him. We suppose that to come.

To get the argot a little more and transpose a true insight of the human, John Cullen had done a dissertation on Charles Williams of all people. Nobody more arcane could be found in 20th century lit. I was later charged of association with Williams because my Taliessin spelled the same as his *Taliessin Through Logres*, but mine had nothing to do with Williams any more than it did with Frank Lloyd Wright, who planted his Taliesin in the desert. Merely cruising around John's fireplace about this, this dissertation and whatever else came up with the word Netzach, victory over fear. As Williams and the Tree of Life fell across our path I marked it down, and he, surprised, said he wished I would write more out of the biblical experience I had had, which may be the most profound thing ever said to me, not that it was ever a direct subject of conversation between us and not that anyone would do differently from what they have done anyway. I was a true insight against the very different and valuable counsel from Jack Minnis, my Tesla-Drexel friend, who wrote to me to doubt faith in order to strengthen it.

# The Biblical Experience

He meant the Biblical poetic and prophetic my speech echoed. Biblical experience is coitus. Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, *Song* begins. Biblical folk, theologians, may not take the biblical as intercourse, but poets are not vexed with theology or practice. They are incompetent to judge between. Auden tells Spender to be a poet "because you are so infinitely capable of being humiliated. Art

is born of humiliation" (World on Worlds, 47). I had got wrapped up in those texts of revelation impossible for scholars to believe, as impossible as revolution as when the rabbi says *Bereshith* was the first word of Genesis because the people did not want the Egyptians to know the name Elohim. I thought about that for a decade. Being incompetent and humiliated, I moved on to the **haShamavim** of the text, the heavens and concluded after another decade this war of the ancient worlds, Israel in all its forms opposed by Egypt-Babylon in all its forms, was over the substitution of *haShamayim* for Elohim. It took years to get that, but everything provocative follows. To substitute creation for the creator is fundamental to all the horrors of world bank and war that I might call myself a scribe of, the biblical text opposed to the critic. I don't mean this opposition as a hermeneutic of the body, but the war encompasses a complete demolition of authorship across the ancient world so that Homer, Lao Tzu, David never wrote a word, and hardly existed at all. The "evidence" critics relate in proof of this concludes that "editors' made the word. No original text is known of Gordon Lish's revised Raymond Carver text or of Pound's Eliot's Wasteland unless there is some law suit. Graduate programs call this the editorial process where they teach their candidates to reduce the sense. These are not the minds that made such texts.

#### That Tabernacle Is the Heaven Itself

To show how far the rabbinical reach, I take it that when Messiah entered a more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, to perform the sacrifice of his blood, as that sublime writer says, that tabernacle was the heaven itself. When I sang Psalm 8 over my daughter hundreds of times, walking in the alleys of Austin, I understood that when **dominion over the works of those hands** was given, that that meant the heavens and that the work of the fingers was included in the hand.

These heavens, the tabernacle of sacrifice and those works of hands, as he says again, were all put in subjection to Yahshua made a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honor so that he should taste death for every man...that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified, for Messiah entered into heaven itself. This cosmic aesthetic is not understood as a matter of comprehension. This is the biblical experience.

## **Spirit**

Incomprehensibility comes from contact with ancient text, follows from it. Kerouac singing the diamond Sutra in the fire watchtowers as a *mook* lookout is a good metaphor for a *watchaman* outside civilization, not to guard it, but for the solitude. To hear the mind wind and go hungry is like methane intoxication which happens around big manure piles where fifteen cubic yard scoops unload. After loading you drive like your tires are squashed. Unloading, the methane is all over you and you wake up at night with its undefinable sense. That's what its like to be born of the spirit, not a nice thing at all, but encompassing, enveloping and inexplicable to tell, methane in hair, on skin. Not to be closer to the flame, but to burn with its fire! It's not a perfume

anyone can smell, but it does make peculiar. The methane comes and then others feel the need to help you find your way, get back on the road. It colors everything the guy knows. *Then* he comes to the ancient text in a biblical experience.

However, he wouldn't be there but for the methane, forgive my French. The methane devours fifty, sixty, seventy years, but each text is surrounded with bullies. Effects don't measure up to the expectations of bullies. Van de Wetering writes of the Zen bullies in his *Afterzen*. Kerouac got disillusioned with Buddhist bullies, and disillusion runs among Unitarian, evangelical, Presbyterian, academic Perry Millers in their *Errants* (*sic.*) *into Wilderness*, still a great book. Academic errand boys with their higher power of sensation-emotion control and tenure easily bully the seminarians asleep on cots in robes, but look out for their hands, look out for their tongues, the gifted tonsures to convince you *richer* to be poorer.

Translations of the self we know, but power mad ecclesiastics around Homer we can spare. They tear him limbs. There is a tearing and a torn. It is more. Better to study in the 2 AM, being driven. Only the wind is blowing. Intensification falls into the text and finds its confirmation of word not translated. This is the more than you bargain for. No need to justify devotion to revelation if it's like meth, either you have it or you don't, but in this case the bullies are busy turning civilization. Methane makes claim for revelation. Any meth head knows. A different meth. There are many meths but only one. Of course revelation has found them out, celebrated so long it

swims around like fish in a Breughel painting or *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, Breughel, Rubens. In translating the text I'm quoting into some context of life. Maybe the text informs my thought, hard to say. Translation is subjective for sure, but based on something. What a fake translation is doesn't confuse the matter really. Taliesin is a translation or it isn't. Translators are scribes at different ends with little credit, not top billing. They room and board, live like monks. The lottery may reward them. Maybe indoctrination wears off, but the critic dragons and flames must be passed. Whose heroic tales passed to the inner sanctum? Bullies all over the *Odyssey* prevent apprehension. Beauty surrounded by counterfeit, danger.

Blessing and danger walk, their hands knit.

It's hard to believe the highest and best are corrupt. Learn to walk in kilns. So the sword of the spirit pierces to the joints and marrow, but choose between the bishops as merciless as Daniel or Abraham in the furnace. Dragons and the giants want to know by what right a breech translation is skewed, depending on whether he lays on his right side or his left, or his back, which of course is backward from the intention of his thought. Do not disbelieve he sees through a glass so darkly.

The nearest a poet comes to sense the intentions coming from another, communicating *through* an alphabet language that reveals the truth already communicated in pictures of information, is the same for all sensory-life-forms. Talk about whether animals feel only occurs in the private pyruvate labs.

The pictures carry more than a letter or word or sentence can convey, a kind of telepathy except it is not thought but whole being between the y and the i of Ameryca and America, the little orphans flying around in the water and fire who later construct post war in its behemoth form. Sail away, Drayton says: you stay too long; Quickly aboard bestow you... before the planetary bulldozers stop at your door.

But experience is comfortable enough, it rests me, it calms me to sleep. Why does the spirit that lives in the soul not know what to do? Another, when has good earth joyed in mirth more? An aside from Aristotle: comedy is contradiction, celebration of defect, moral turpitude. Let it be well made, but judged according to the conventions and the public agreement about value. If you are not of the convention and do not belong to the social, are an unknown, to sell one painting and be dismissed as mad Blake, conflicted Hopkins, the tension is still between innocence and experience but the conventions that wrap them switch. Innocence must be the highest intelligence but it is changed into what it's not, taken by some priest of the intellect into the casuistry. That code is the first to break, to stop denying that this is being done, driving witless machines into unconscious beds of streams, yes, it is profoundly disturbing to oppose peace. That code is the first one broken, to stop denying that this is being done.

So after sitting across from yourself, designing a life, one goes before a review board for advice, or

consent, to argue the position, difficulties and purpose while the board seeks to poke holes in the what ifs, so to speak. If the purpose is to do the impossible, which the spirit doesn't know is possible, the board has to help design. Only the interplay of blessing and danger, positive and negative difficulties can make the thing worth it.

What's the point of a gimme? So the difficulties provoke the spirit to its work, but the problem is always the spirit itself, for once it enters life prone to its own bias it needs counterweight, balance from people and situations. The board must design these people in a web of relation that catch the spirit and give it a chance to be reckless. If not caught it will perish, immediately reckless from the moment its feet hit the ground. But the spirit is further prone to itself; its biggest danger is itself, a waywardness to paths outside its design, just because it is reckless. From these avenues it needs rescue, which is the purpose of those people in place to catch it before it goes too far.

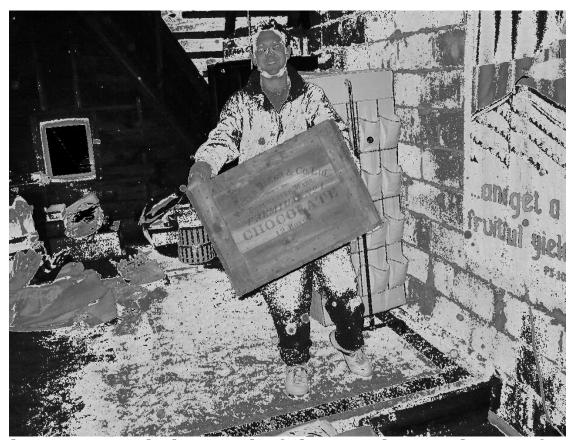
America spelled with a Y was not the only whole preoccupation of those years of composition, which included also, poetically, "Nightingale" simultaneously, and The Taliesin Poems, written before and after trips to Wales at Christmas 1973 and summer 1974, "The Nightingale," written immediately before. These however were not formally published and hardly even announced. It's a lot like a guy concussed, returned from wars, who knows nothing of himself and has to suffer

through the thoughts, the memories, the acts he committed.

WWII vets make this evident, but every war contributes. They come back, the unknown soldiers if they survive, to be solid citizens. They never say a word even to their wives in bed of what they did. With good reason. The shame and terror is that great, but they relive it being prickly at moments, difficult, to be tiptoed around. The saving grace for these is their buddies with whom they share the blood. Cleo Eden's father was just this way, parachuted out of a B17 at 21 and was a POW in a couple of Stalags for about a year, so she, without knowing, as a daughter was groomed to care for this situation in much the way her mother had. Except the war I returned from is the first one, old as history, one I conceive as against humanity. Along the way I have no problem visiting its victims where I find them, Karl in the asylum in NC, Cryil later at Terrell outside Dallas, the shelter people, the foreigners, the immigrants I live among. It is an honor to be associated with one such as herself who lays hands on the wounds of these. It is always the entitled who abhor them.

When I sat down in the spiritual to design this life I took counsel and got permission to try this spirit to mature, not that anybody recognizes such a place in the Sky, the name invented, where one designs a life before it is lived. I saw the moment before waking and recognized this was as possible as unbelievable, amorphous and dissolving as waking took hold. So life is but a sleep and a forgetting. Back to planning,

to take the line that a mission easy is pointless, and further that it had promise if what was achieved was the impact of forces, the provision of allies, especially the one to whom this work is dedicated, the flexibility, the pains, wrestling odds, the conspiracy self-designed to give or get no breaks in order to bake that chemical water out of the clay,



the water and chemical of that mighty coalition of blessing and danger, which phrase, blessing and danger, was written on the walls at Glastonbury. AE Reiff has two books on war, Red Head / A Reparation for Cruelty: Poems of the Unknown Soldier, successive winter and summer explorations of every stone site and fort of north England and Wales along the Irish Sea off Bangor and Anglesey of mythical grave sites of warriors who fell in the four ancient books of Wales. The place names of Welsh and the Celtic languages older than Anglo-Saxon, coexistent with Rome and Iberian tribes, are enriched with Viking place names that dot the north coasts where his family name also resides in Gaelic form. It also appears in the first Anglo-Saxon translation of the Gospel of *Luke* by Eadfrith about 715. Involvement with the Ingvaeonic branching of English and Scandinavian in these languages begins with this work after dissertation research on the America voyages. Having appeared in mags on line and in print *Red Head* poems gather here under the cover of an ink monotype cover portrait of Taliesin by the author. The second work against war, A Bloody History of Divine Light (2022), has been generously reviewed as: "magical, completely mad,

jousting with society, but somehow untouchable, pristine and pure of heart." (Bill Weaver).